



MIAMI BEACH

OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER

NO. LTC # 133-2006

LETTER TO COMMISSION

TO: Mayor David Dermer and Members of the City Commission

FROM: Jorge M. Gonzalez, City Manager

DATE: May 11, 2006

SUBJECT: ADA PILOT PROJECT UPDATE

The purpose of this letter is to provide a status update regarding the ADA Pilot Project undertaken at the request of the Land Use and Development Committee. The project involves encouraging voluntary compliance by Miami Beach businesses with the barrier removal obligations of Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA).

Eight target businesses identified through a survey and on-site inspections as an appropriate sampling for the project were contacted by the City. The project was explained to the property owners and informed them they should expect to be contacted by the City's liaison to schedule a visit.

Since the Committee's 12/12/05 meeting, on-site visits and follow-up phone calls were made to the target properties. Details of these activities are as follows:

- Princess Ann Hotel, 920 Collins Avenue:
 - On 12/15/05, the City met with the manager regarding entrance access issues. As a result of the meeting, it was determined that the hotel has one step up to a front porch, then several more steps up to the lobby doorway. Once inside, there are approximately a half dozen steps up to the first level of guest rooms. The rear entrance is off of an alley and has multiple steps with twists and turns. We suggested that the manager have an architectural/engineering firm evaluate whether a ramp can be constructed along the south side of the hotel, with an entrance at the top of the ramp, leading to the first level of guestrooms.
 - On 3/30/06, the most recent follow-up phone call was made. The owner is currently working with an architect to develop plans for addressing the access issues to the property.
- Blue Moon Hotel, 944 Collins Avenue:
 - On 12/15/05, the City met with the general manager regarding entrance access issues. As a result of the meeting, it was determined that there is a compliant ramp that provides access to the hotel's main entrance. However, several tiles were missing from the ramp surface and the mounting of the ramp railings was questionable. We asked the general manager to have these corrected.
 - On 2/1/06, the general manager called and stated that the missing tiles have been replaced and the ramp rails were determined to be compliant, as they are mounted one and half inches from the wall.

- Beach Legal Properties, Inc. – parking lot at 69th Street and Harding Avenue:
 - On 1/3/06, the City met with Nathalie Schukrou, a representative of the owner/operator of the parking lot. Two access issues were apparent. While the lot had one accessible parking space – which is all the code requires – the width of the space and adjacent access aisle appeared to be non-compliant. The space also lacked signage. The second access issue was a lack of an accessible route from the accessible parking space to the building entrance. Ms. Schukrou said she would bring these issues to the attention of the property owner.
 - On 2/27/06, a follow-up phone call established that the barrier-removal items were completed on 2/24/06.

- Loft Hotel, 952 Collins Avenue:
 - On 1/11/06, the City met with the owner. There are several steps up to the front door entrance of the hotel, with zero set-back from the sidewalk. However, the back entrance from the alley has just two small steps that could be ramped, starting from inside the entrance. With these steps ramped, guests could easily reach the first level of guestrooms as well as the hotel office. The owner said he would have an assessment done by an architecture/engineering firm.
 - On 1/30/06, a follow-up phone call was made. The owner stated that he had not yet been able to move forward with the project, but he was in the process of finding an engineer to consult with.
 - On 3/30/06, the property owner said that he had decided not to proceed with barrier-removal since he would be selling the property to another party to convert into condos.

- Viscay Hotel, 960 Collins:
 - On 12/1/05, the City met with the owner, who stated that he would in the near future be submitting plans to the Building Department for the installation of a mechanical lift to provide access to the hotel. He also discussed plans to renovate other common areas to improve access.
 - On 1/30/06, a follow-up phone call was made. The owner stated that he is in the process of finishing the permitting for renovations to another property and needed to conclude those before proceeding with drafting plans for the barrier-removal for the hotel.
 - On 3/31/06, another follow-up phone call determined the same status as before. However, the owner did expect to undertake the hotel's barrier removal sometime in 2006.

- City National Bank, 300 71st Street:
 - On 12/6/05, the City visited with the Vice President of Administrative Services regarding a too-steep access ramp in the path of travel from the nearby accessible parking and an employee/tenant parking lot across the street lacking accessible parking spaces.
 - On 1/31/06, a follow-up phone call established that the access ramp had been demolished and re-installed at a compliant slope. The bank's plans to install accessible parking in the employee/tenant lot across the street are on hold because the bank is currently engaged in negotiations with the City regarding the City's possible purchase of the lot for a mixed-use development. The City's Planning Department has suggested that the negotiators be given some time to reach a conclusion first before the Pilot Project continues to pursue barrier removal in the employee/tenant lot.
 - On 3/30/06, the Planning Department verified that the negotiations are still proceeding.

Preliminary field visits have determined that the following businesses are deficient in number of accessible parking spaces. These businesses were therefore added in March 2006 to the project:

- Epicure, 1681 West Ave (independent parking lot to north of Epicure lot, being rented by Epicure): 66 total spaces; zero accessible spaces.
- Normandy Isle Decorating Center, 1118 Normandy Drive: eight total spaces; zero accessible spaces.
- Estrella Insurance, 1108 Normandy Drive: two spaces; zero accessible spaces.
- Radisson Deauville Hotel, 6701 Collins Avenue: parking lot located on Indian Creek: 181 total spaces; zero accessible spaces.

Letters to the owners of the four properties stated above have been drafted and are being delivered.

The next phase for this project will include follow-up site visits with the four recently added businesses, with a goal date for completion of the visits by 4/28/06. Also to be carried out are periodic contacts with the original group of businesses to monitor the progress of their barrier-removal plans. These contacts will continue through 6/30/06, and at such time, we will evaluate the effectiveness of the voluntary compliance approach being used with this project.

If you have any questions or require additional information, please contact Fred Beckmann, Public Works Director at ext. 6012.


JMG/FHB/RTH/hjw

c: Robert C. Middaugh, Assistant City Manager
Fred H. Beckmann, Public Works Director

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